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20. — *Lyra Anglicana ; or a Hymnal of Sacred Poetry selected from the best English Writers, and arranged after the Order of the Apostles' Creed.* By the REV. GEORGE T. RIDER, M. A. New York: Appleton. 1864. 12mo. pp. xiv., 288.

THIS pretty volume is neither better nor worse than most of its kind. There are a few fine poems in it, and a great deal of mere mechanic stuff; — all the worse for pretending to be pious. Doggerel is called sacred, which would tempt the blindest critic to be profane. When we think what religion is and what poetry is, and what their marriage ought to be, a great part of what is published as religious poetry seems to us a scandalous mockery. If one wish to satisfy himself how utterly without true feeling and poetic merit such verses are, let him but change the sacred names in them for others without such lifelong associations, and consider what chance they would run of being read. There are many pieces in this volume that Mr. Rider himself could not tolerate if they were printed as secular poetry. It is really time that a protest should be uttered against this stupid hallucination which lets rhymesters vent themselves on the Highest and Holiest, who would not be tolerated on more worldly topics. Mr. Rider's selection is, we think, better than most; and his Preface is as fine and incomprehensible as language can make it.

Since writing thus far, we have received another selection of the same kind by Mr. Rider, from American poets. It has the same editorial merits and the same essential defects as its predecessor. The selection shows great catholicity of spirit. But we must object to Mr. Rider's use of the word Puritan in his Preface. "To the Puritan," he says, "the Beautiful was recognized in none of its spiritual relations. The Beautiful was rather a sorceress, — an unwholesome mirage of experience that called for the exorcist." We are not sure that we understand the whole of this. The "unwholesome mirage of experience" utterly defies us. Mr. Rider probably means that the Puritans had a dread of the sensuously beautiful; for surely he would not say they did not recognize the beauty of holiness. This might be true of the Independents, — though we should remember that Cromwell saved Raphael's cartoons, — but is not true of the Puritans properly so called. George Herbert, a truly sacred poet, and the best of the kind in English, was a Puritan, and wrote, as Mr. Rider ought to know,

"Religion stands on tiptoe in this land,
Ready to pass to the American strand."

Spenser, to whom Mr. Rider alludes, and whom his printers have transformed into the Hon. W. R. Spencer, was also a Puritan. He surely

"recognized the Beautiful in its spiritual relations." In writing upon theory, an author should keep as clear as may be of any allusion to illustrative facts. They are very unmanageable. If we understand the meaning of words, we think it would take Mr. Rider a great while to prove Shakespeare a "Christian poet," as he calls him.

21. — "*Their Majesties' Servants.*" *Annals of the English Stage from Thomas Betterton to Edmund Kean. Actors — Authors — Audiences.* By DR. DORAN, F. S. A., &c., &c. In Two Volumes. New York: Widdleton. 1865. pp. 424, 422.

Two volumes of rather slipshod gossip, written in a style which is bad even for a Fellow of the Society of Antiquaries. The book, however, is not without entertainment, and Dr. Doran's judgment of the merits of particular plays is more than commonly discriminating. He does justice to stout old Colley Cibber, a clever playwright and an honest man, still spotted with the filthy mud of Pope. But he gives us no vivid impression of the styles of the great actors. We turned to Garrick, for example, only to be disappointed. Lichtenberg's description and criticism of him are far better than all Dr. Doran gives us put together.

These volumes are very prettily printed, but disfigured by more errors of the press than we remember to have met with in the same number of pages, even in this day of careless work. In the two pages, 40 and 41 of Volume I. we have marked six misprints, and there are many others quite as bad, or worse. Sometimes the blunders are of the most offensive kind, as "Zanger" for "Zanga." Mr. Alvord has considerable reputation as a printer, but he will surely lose it unless he employs better proof-readers; for correctness in printing is like what prudence is said to be among the virtues, a prosy thing in itself, but without it all the rest are worthless.

22. — *The Irvington Stories.* By M. E. DODGE. Illustrated by F. O. C. Darley. New York: James O'Kane. 1865. pp. 256.

VERY pleasant little stories, written in good simple English, with just enough improbability in them to suit the minds of children, for whom the age of fancy and fable renews itself in every generation. They are not sermons in words of two syllables, they are not prosy; but what is gracious and lovely in childhood is appealed to indirectly, and with something of motherly tenderness in the tone. Good books for children are so rare, and books to make little spoonies so common, that we are glad to say a word in praise of one so graceful and pleasing.